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SERIAL NO.: n/a (Nat. Phase of PCT/IL2004/001036)
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1 - 45 (cancelled)

46. (New) A catheter introducer, including:

- a catheter having a catheter hub and an axial through channel with a proximal end portion made as a female luer lock portion;

- a needle assembly comprising:

- a needle with a distal sharp point, which extends through said catheter channel,

- a safety means having a protector for protecting said needle distal sharp point after introducing said catheter into a blood vessel,

- a protected position of elements of said needle assembly in which said needle is protected by said protector;

- and a catheter cap for occluding a proximal opening of said catheter after the transposition of said needle to a protected position, therewith said catheter cap is detachably positioned on said needle assembly so that, after said needle protection, said catheter cap is accessible for occluding said catheter proximal opening without previous detachment of said catheter cap from said needle assembly.

47. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 46, wherein said catheter cap has a sealing surface, which provides the sealing contact with said catheter upon mounting said catheter cap onto said catheter.

48. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 47, wherein there is a mounting means for mounting said catheter cap on said needle assembly and their detaching, and said mounting means has first and second mounting elements one of which is disposed on said needle assembly and the other on said catheter cap.

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49. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 47, wherein said catheter cap and the detail of said needle assembly on which it is positioned are made as a single part.

50. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 47, wherein there is a shielding means preventing said sealing surface of catheter cap from accidental contact with the operator before mounting said catheter cap onto said catheter.

51. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 50, wherein said shielding means is made as a shielding wall enclosing said sealing surface and protruding beyond its open edge.

52. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 47, wherein said catheter cap has a tapered male luer member and said sealing surface is the conical surface of said tapered male luer member.

53. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 52, wherein said tapered male luer member of said catheter cap disposed on said needle assembly is directed outwardly.

54. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 48, wherein there is a stabilizing means ruling out the rotation of said sealing surface with respect to said needle assembly during mounting said catheter cap onto said catheter.

55. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 54, wherein said stabilizing means is made as at least one slot and at least one projection, one of which is located on said first mounting element and the other on said second mounting element so that said projection slidably enters said slot.

56. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 54, wherein said stabilizing means is made as a thread disposed on said first and second mounting elements.

57. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 54, wherein said stabilizing means is made in the form of interacting a female conical portion and a male conical element, one of which is disposed on said first mounting element and the other on said second mounting element.

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58. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 48, wherein said catheter cap is detachably retained on said needle assembly by the friction forces between said first and second mounting elements.

59. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 46, wherein, after protecting said needle distal sharp point with said safety means, said needle assembly has a proximal end and a distal end, and said catheter cap is positioned at one of said needle assembly ends.

60. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 59, wherein said catheter cap is disposed on said protector.

61. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 59, wherein said catheter cap is disposed on a hub of said needle.

62. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 59, wherein
said catheter cap is positioned at said proximal end of needle assembly;
said catheter cap has a tapered male luer member and said sealing surface is the conical surface of said tapered male luer member and said tapered male luer member is directed proximally.

63. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 59, wherein
said catheter cap is positioned at said distal end of needle assembly;
said catheter cap has a tapered male luer member and said sealing surface is the conical surface of said tapered male luer member and said tapered male luer member is directed distally.

64. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 53, wherein said catheter cap is positioned between said distal and proximal ends of said needle assembly and said tapered male luer member of catheter cap is directed laterally.

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65. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 46, wherein said catheter cap is provided with a thread for fixing said catheter cap on said catheter.

66. (New) The catheter introducer of claim 47, wherein

said protector is made in the form of a barrel having a distal end and proximal end and said needle in said protected position is located inside of said barrel;

said catheter cap

is detachably positioned at said protector proximal end and;

has a tapered male luer member and said sealing surface is the conical surface of said tapered male luer member and said tapered male luer member is directed proximally.